

Testimony for the Appropriations Committee February 24, 2023

Dear Committee members:

I am the CEO of the Housatonic Area Regional Transit District (HARTransit) based in Danbury. HARTransit operates public bus, ADA Paratransit and senior/disabled dial-a-ride services. Our service area encompasses nine communities in Connecticut and four in New York.

I am writing to you today concerning two items up for consideration in HB 6659

Firstly, we are pleased that HARTransit was included under the list of proposed projects to Expand Bus Service to Support Workforce Transportation. This expansion will allow for increased bus service to western Danbury after hours and on Sundays and holidays. By Improving the span of service of the transit system, people will be able to rely on bus service for employment seven days a week and can get home from a second shift job or get to a third shift job.

While this expansion is great news, the reduction in FY 24 then flat funding of the ADA Paratransit Line item is a major concern not just for riders of those trips, who are people with disabilities, but also for the continued operation of fixed route bus services.

Complementary ADA Paratransit is a federal requirement for operators of fixed route services; it is a mandated service for people with disabilities that are unable to access public buses. There are strict rules on comparable trip times on ADA Paratransit and trip denials are essentially not allowed. Cutting funding for ADA Paratransit will not only impact these riders, but also places the state and operators at risk for federal enforcement actions or forced reductions in public bus service.

Thank you for your consideration.

Richard Schreiner  
CEO  
HARTransit  
62 Federal Rd  
Danbury, CT 06810